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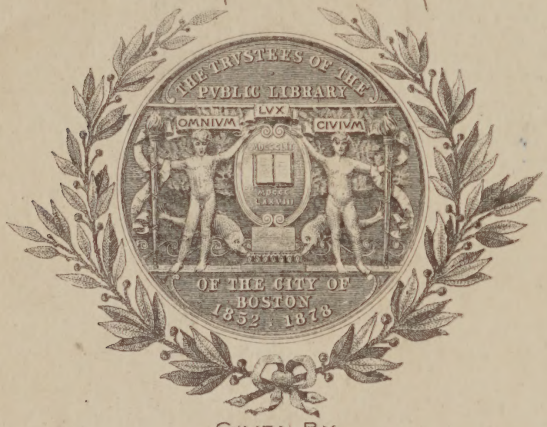

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THE OLD SOUTH COUNCIL

FOR THE

INSTALLATION

OF THE

7551.247

Rev. GEORGE A. GORDON

APRIL 2, 1884

THE OLD SOUTH COUNCIL

CALLED FOR THE

INSTALLATION

OF THE

Rev. GEORGE A. GORDON

7551.247

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 1884

CUPPLES, UPHAM & CO.
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"THAT YOUR FAITH
SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN,
BUT IN THE POWER OF GOD."

Estate of Rev. Henry W. Foote.
August 15, 1904

Press of T. R. Marvin & Son, Boston.

NOTE.

THE Committee of Arrangements for the installation of the Rev. George A. Gordon, requested Mr. J. M. W. Yerrinton to be in attendance at the meeting of the Council, and to make an exact report of all that was said and done. The statement of religious belief read by Mr. Gordon, and the cross-examination which followed, were given at the time in the daily papers, and were widely made known by the very large sale which both the regular and supplementary issues of these papers had; but it is believed that no full list of the members of the Council has yet been printed, and other particulars have been wanting to make the record complete. It seems desirable also, that the record should be put into form for permanent reference and for future use. The following pages are therefore presented, under the authority of the Standing Committees of the Old South Church and Society.

BOSTON, April 21, 1884.

FROM

THE CREED

REPORTED BY THE CREED COMMISSION

DECEMBER 19, 1883

X. We believe . . . that these churches under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures and in fellowship with one another, may determine—each for itself—their organization, statements of belief, and forms of worship; may appoint and set apart their own ministers, and should co-operate in the work which Christ has committed to them for the furtherance of the gospel throughout the world.

THE OLD SOUTH COUNCIL

APRIL 2, 1884

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

At the annual meeting of the Old South Church, January 9th, 1882, a committee of four, with such as the Society might join, was appointed to select some person to be nominated as minister to fill the place made vacant by the Rev. Dr. Manning's retirement from the duties of the pastorate. A few days later the Society concurred in this action, and added three to the committee. This joint committee, at a special meeting of the Church, held on Monday Evening, December 13th, 1882, reported the name of the Rev. George A. Gordon, of Greenwich, Conn., and recommended that he be called to the Old South pastorate. The Church voted unanimously to extend a call to Mr. Gordon, and, on the first of January following, the Society concurred.

A joint committee, duly instructed, transmitted the call, and on the tenth of the same month, Mr. Gordon sent a reply, declining the invitation, in view of what he regarded as the pressing claims of his work at

Greenwich at the time. This answer was communicated to the Church and Society respectively; and by both, the letter was recommitted to the committee appointed to communicate the call, with instructions to confer further with Mr. Gordon, "with a view to bringing him to us as our pastor at the earliest practicable time."

The call was renewed in writing, January 4th, 1884, and was accepted by Mr. Gordon, in a letter dated January 11th, the pastorate to begin on the first Sunday in April next following. The letter of acceptance was laid before the Church and Society, and a joint committee was chosen to decide, in conference with the pastor-elect, upon the time of installation, to select the Council, to prepare and issue a letter-missive, to lay before the Council the proceedings and correspondence relating to the call, and to make all arrangements for the installation services. At the weekly meeting of the Church, Friday Evening, March 7th, Mr. Gordon was formally received into the membership, in compliance with an ancient rule requiring that the pastor-elect shall become a member before installation. He presented a letter of dismission and recommendation from the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Boston,[1] and made a statement of his belief and experience, after which he was admitted by hand vote of the brethren, and welcomed in behalf of the Church by the senior deacon.

On the first of April Mr. Gordon arrived in Boston and took possession of the Old South parsonage,

[1] On the day after the Council, the elders of the Fourth Presbyterian Church called at the Old South parsonage to congratulate Mr. Gordon on his installation, and to make a valuable present of books.

which had been made ready for him. In the meantime the following letter-missive had been issued:

The Old South Church, Boston,

To the

SENDETH GREETING.

DEAR BRETHREN:

The Great Head of the Church having graciously united our hearts in the choice of the Rev. George A. Gordon, now pastor of the Second Congregational Church, Greenwich, Conn., as our pastor and teacher, and he having accepted our call to this office, an Ecclesiastical Council for installation and recognition will be held on the afternoon and evening of Wednesday, the second day of April next. You are hereby cordially invited to participate, by your pastor and a delegate, in the proceedings of this Council, which will be convened in our Meeting House, Boylston Street, Boston, on the day aforesaid, at three o'clock P. M., when the action of the Church and Society, and the correspondence in connection with the call, will be laid before you, and the pastor-elect will make a statement of his religious belief, preliminary to the usual public services in the evening.

In behalf of the Old South Church and Society,

AVERY PLUMER,
SAMUEL JOHNSON,
RICHARD H. STEARNS,
HAMILTON A. HILL,
GEORGE R. CHAPMAN,
Committee of the Church.

ALPHEUS HARDY,
SAMUEL R. PAYSON,
JOSEPH H. GRAY,
LINUS M. CHILD,
Committee of the Society.

BOSTON, March 10, 1884.

This letter, it will be seen, in its tenor and spirit, was in harmony with the letters-missive for installations

which passed among the churches of Massachusetts during the first two hundred years of their history, and was in full accord with the tenth article of the new Congregational Creed, in which the independence of the local church in its choice and settlement of a minister, and the fellowship of the churches, are alike and equally insisted upon.[1]

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[1] We place side by side, a letter sent in 1808, inviting the Old South Church to assist in the ordination and installation of the late Dr. Codman, and one sent in 1883, inviting the same Church to assist in the installation of an ordained clergyman who for several years had been a successful pastor in another city. A comparison of the two will show how the fellowship of the churches has been perverted into an usurpation, and may help to explain why so many churches and so many ministers in our denomination have preferred acting-pastorates to what they or many of them have been supposing was the necessary submission of themselves and their affairs and their statements of belief to an installation council.

To the South Church of Christ in Boston, under the Pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Eckley and the Rev. Joshua Huntington.

Christian Friends and Brethren, Mr. John Codman having accepted the call of the Second Church and Society in Dorchester, to take the same under his Pastoral care,— the Subscribers in behalf of said Church respectfully request you by your Pastors and Delegates to attend in Council — with the other Churches to whom letters missive are directed; to afford your assistance in the Ordination, on Wednesday, the seventh day of December next, at the house of Mr. Samuel Richards, in said Dorchester, at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

Wishing you Grace, Mercy and Peace, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, they subscribe themselves, your Brethren in the faith and hope of the Gospel.

DORCHESTER, Nov. 16, 1808.

The . . . . . .

To the Old South Church
Sendeth Greeting: —

Dear Brethren: — The Great Head of the Church has kindly united us and the congregation statedly worshiping with us, in the choice of . . . as our pastor and teacher, and he has accepted our invitation to that office.

We, therefore, affectionately request your attendance, by your pastor and a delegate, at our church . . . Tuesday, the 16th of October, at 3 o'clock P. M., to examine the candidate, review our proceedings and advise with us in reference to the same, and, if judged expedient, to assist in the installation service.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace, we are fraternally yours.

. . . . . Oct. 3, 1883.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council for installation and recognition assembled in the Chapel of the Old South Church on Wednesday, the second of April, 1884, at 3 P. M. A large congregation was present to witness the proceedings.

The Rev. Dr. Webb called the Council to order; he read the letter-missive, and was chosen Moderator. The Rev. Wm. Burnet Wright was chosen Scribe. The Moderator opened the exercises with prayer.

The roll of pastors and delegates, when made up, was as follows:

Park Street Church, Boston: the Rev. J. L. Withrow, D. D., pastor; Deacon Ezra Farnsworth, delegate.

Union Church, Boston: the Rev. R. R. Meredith, D. D., pastor; Deacon O. S. Sanders, delegate.

Berkeley Street Church, Boston: the Rev. William Burnet Wright, pastor; Deacon S. Brainard Pratt, delegate.

Central Church, Boston: the Rev. J. T. Duryea, D. D., pastor; Deacon J. N. Denison, delegate.

Mt. Vernon Church, Boston: the Rev. S. E. Herrick, D. D., pastor; Deacon Andrew Cushing, delegate.

Shawmut Church, Boston: the Rev. E. B. Webb, D. D., pastor; Brother M. F. Dickinson, Jr., delegate.

Phillips Church, South Boston: the Rev. F. E. Clark, pastor; Brother Calvin W. Angier, delegate.

Second Church, Dorchester: the Rev. E. N. Packard, pastor; the Rev. Elijah Cutler, delegate.

Village Church, Dorchester: the Rev. S. P. Fay, pastor; Brother Reuben Swan, delegate.

Pilgrim Church, Dorchester: the Rev. J. W. Ballantine, pastor; Brother W. Cohoone Greene, delegate.

Evangelical Congregational Church, Brighton: the Rev. W. H. Leavell, pastor; Brother Chas. S. Cook, delegate.

Eliot Church, Roxbury: the Rev. A. C. Thompson, D. D., and the Rev. B. F. Hamilton, pastors; Deacon Chas. W. Hill, delegate.

Immanuel Church, Roxbury: the Rev. M. Burnham, pastor; Deacon Joseph S. Ropes, delegate.

Highland Church, Roxbury: the Rev. W. R. Campbell, pastor; Deacon John C. Proctor, delegate.

Walnut Avenue Church, Roxbury: the Rev. A. H. Plumb, D. D., pastor; Brother George H. Davenport, delegate.

South Evangelical Church, West Roxbury: the Rev. C. A. Beckwith, pastor; the Rev. N. G. Clark, D. D., delegate.

Central Church, Jamaica Plain: the Rev. G. M. Boynton, pastor; Deacon S. B. Capen, delegate.

Boylston Congregational Church, Jamaica Plain: the Rev. S. S. Mathews, pastor: Deacon G. E. S. Kinney, delegate.

Harvard Church, Brookline: the Rev. Reuen Thomas, Ph. D., pastor; Deacon H. S. Burdett, delegate.

First Church, Cambridge: the Rev. A. McKenzie, D. D., pastor; Brother J. M. W. Hall, delegate.

North Avenue Church, Cambridge: the Rev. C. F. Thwing, pastor: Deacon Wm. Fox Richardson, delegate.

First Church, Charlestown: the Rev. G. W. Brooks, pastor: Deacon Anthony S. Morss, delegate.

Winthrop Church, Charlestown: the Rev. A. S. Twombly, D. D., pastor; Brother C. E. Rogers, delegate.

First Church, Somerville: the Rev. W. E. Merriman, D. D., pastor; Brother Edward C. Porter, delegate.

First Church, Chelsea: Brother Rufus S. Frost, delegate.

First Church, Newton Centre: the Rev. T. J. Holmes, pastor; Brother George P. Davis, delegate.

Second Church, West Newton: the Rev. H. J. Patrick, pastor; Deacon H. P. Barber, delegate.

Eliot Church, Newton: Brother Geo. C. Dunne, delegate.

Hancock Church, Lexington: the Rev. E. G. Porter, pastor; Brother Geo. W. Berry, delegate.

Kirk Street Church, Lowell: the Rev. C. A. Dickinson, pastor; Brother Jacob Rogers, delegate.

South Church, Salem: the Rev. E. S. Atwood, D. D., pastor; Brother J. C. Osgood, delegate.

Second Congregational Church, Greenwich, Conn.: Deacon Charles Mead and Brother L. P. Hubbard, delegates.

High Street Church, Portland, Maine: the Rev. W. H. Fenn, pastor; Brother James B. Libby, delegate.

Congregational Church, Temple, Maine: the Rev. A. G. Fitz, pastor.

Also,

The Rev. G. W. Blagden, D. D., New York.
The Rev. W. J. Tucker, D. D., Andover.
The Rev. W. M. Barbour, D. D., New Haven.
The Rev. I. N. Tarbox, D. D., West Newton.
The Rev. C. A. Stoddard, D. D., New York.

The Maverick Church, East Boston, voted to accept the invitation, but neither its pastor nor delegate was able to be present. The Rev. J. H. Means, D. D., Dorchester, and the Rev. J. H. Thayer, D. D., Cambridge, were also invited, but could not attend.

It will be seen that the Council was exceptionally large, able, and representative. Thirty-four churches were represented, and thirty-nine clergymen and thirty-two laymen were on the roll.

The records of the Church and Society relating to the call, with all the correspondence, were read by Mr. Hamilton A. Hill, Clerk of the Church, and Deacon Moses Merrill, Clerk of the Society. Mr. Gordon's admission to membership in the Old South Church appeared as a part of the record presented, and the following Result of a recent Council was

read, to certify to his ministerial and ecclesiastical standing:—

The Ecclesiastical Council, convened at the call of the Second Congregational Church, Greenwich, Conn., March 25, 1884, unanimously adopted the following

RESULT.

In view of the resignation of the Pastor, Rev. George A. Gordon, and the unanimous acceptance of it by the Church and Society: in view also of the conviction of duty on his part, and the conviction on their part of the leadings of Providence, we cordially approve their action.

We cannot forbear to express our high esteem for Brother Gordon, and our profound regret at his departure from our vicinity, and commend him as a brother beloved, and an efficient and faithful servant of Christ, who has made it evident to us that he has not been enamored by the love of change, but has carefully listened for, and obeyed, the voice of God in this matter.

We express also our sincere sympathy for the Church at the loss of one so greatly beloved and useful, and our great satisfaction that they so unitedly acquiesce in the manifest leadings of Providence. Also, we congratulate them, in view of the prospect that the good work which Brother Gordon has begun, promises to be continued and carried forward without break or hindrance.

(Signed) R. B. THURSTON,
Moderator.

H. MARTIN KELLOGG,
Scribe.

GREENWICH, CONN.,
March 25, 1884.

Mr. Gordon read the following statement of his religious belief:—

STATEMENT OF THE PASTOR-ELECT.

In the book of Genesis we are told that when the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air he brought them before Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature *that* was the name thereof. If the Lord God had brought these same fowls of the air and beasts of the field before some of Adam's children, Seth, Enoch or Methuselah, for example, they might have named these living creatures differently, and because of this verbal difference hasty men might have concluded that Adam and his children must be contemplating different orders of creation. Nevertheless a glance at the living creatures which Adam named and at those which his sons named would have revealed the supremely important fact that in both cases the living creatures were the same. Both alike beheld with wonder and admiration the same fowls of the air, the same beasts of the field, and so were in essential agreement.

Every earnest Christian thinker looks into the living facts of God's revelation for himself. He cannot rest until his own eyes have seen the relations which God sustains to men and which men sustain to God. God's dealings with men from the beginning, God manifest in Christ, the two great laws of the spiritual life—the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus and the awful law of sin and death—are living things upon which his own eyes must rest. Perhaps he will name some of them for himself, rejecting the old names. But because he does this in any case, or in all cases, it must not be inferred that he is not beholding with love and awe and praise the same living things which all other Christian thinkers behold.

I believe in the existence of one only living and true God. His name in the Scriptures is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I

believe in his existence because my reason demands a sufficient ground for all that appears within me, about me, beneath me, and above me; an original fountain from which this Divine fullness comes—a power able to bring into being, and to maintain in being, all forms of dependent existence. To me nothing could be more irresistible than this cry of reason, that for everything that has appeared, or does appear, or will appear, in this universe, there must be a sufficient ground. I believe that this ground of all things is intelligent, because, to my mind, nothing else can account for the sublime order and wonderful adaptation of means to ends everywhere visible in the universe. I believe that this ground is a moral ground for another aspect of the same reason. In the experience of the individual, in the experience of society, and in the records of history, there is revealed a moral order which the individual perceives, which society perceives, but which neither the individual nor society makes. To me this moral order is at once a witness of the existence and of the moral intelligence of God.

I do not think that the phrase, "consciousness of God," adds anything to these arguments. It simply states them in another way. When a thoughtful man tells me that he has a "consciousness of God," I understand him to mean that his intellect and heart are at rest in a conclusion to which he has been led, and in which he is maintained by the necessity of a sufficient ground for all dependent existence, by the marks of creative intelligence in matter and in mind, and by the moral order of the world. So, too, with the idea of God. When analyzed, it means the capacity which is native to the mind for forming the conception of God. This capacity is elicited and filled out into an actual conception by finding in experience evidence which forces one to believe in a first cause, and that the first cause must be intelligent and moral. However, there are in the general idea of God certain purely *a priori* elements, such as infinity, eternity, and absolute perfection, which seek, but seek in vain, for complete verification in experience, and which point with great impressiveness to one

who is in experience, and who transcends it,—to a being who is all-powerful, all-wise, and absolutely good. This is the God in whom I believe.

Another impressive evidence of the truth of my faith in God I may state thus: Begin with the assumption that there is a God. Build individual, domestic, social and national life on this principle. Individual, domestic, social and national life thus attain to the highest possible development in peace, power and splendor. Herein is found a verification, a justification, of the spiritual assumption from which we set out. That must be true which makes us true.

I believe that God has given to men a special revelation of his will. This revelation is made through the history of the chosen people, culminating in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Underneath the spiritual life of the whole world, in explanation of it, I would place these words of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." But God's treatment of the Jewish people was special and peculiar, and from one of this race the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and unveiled his own and his Father's eternal glory.

I would use the word revelation in two senses; first, in reference to the discovered will of God, wherever or by whomsoever made; second, in reference to that special and practically complete unveiling of the Divine mind which we have in the Bible. By inspiration, I mean the fitness which God has given to the men whom he has called to the special work of apprehending and expressing his *will*. The revelation contained in the Bible is the unveiling of God's will which I find in it; inspiration is the means which he employed for that purpose—the state of mind in the human agent necessary for the apprehension and expression of that will. Thus the will of God is the objective truth. This truth is progressively discovered through a great number of men, in different periods, who were enabled to apprehend and express it, each apprehend-

ing and expressing a part, all the parts going to constitute the whole, the whole being summed up and set forth in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This, then, is the order of my thought upon this great topic. First, I believe in God; second, I find God revealing himself in the human life of which the Old and New Testaments give us a record; finally, I believe that God has qualified, that is, inspired, the men who were the channel of this communication.

I believe that in Jesus Christ we have the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. I accept him as God manifest in the flesh, as God's unspeakable gift to men. In him God appears reconciling the world to himself. I do not pretend even to an adequate, much less to a complete, apprehension of the work of Christ in reconciliation. I believe in it. I am a student of it. I hold it to be intelligible. In respect to it I anticipate as among my chief delights greater clearness and extent of vision. I earnestly believe that prolonged and independent study of the word of God, much personal experience of Christ's power upon the human heart, wide and intimate acquaintance with the forms which the Christian life assumes in other men, are absolutely essential to right ideas upon a subject so vast, so profound, so purely spiritual. To the question, What is the purpose and end of the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? I answer that the purpose is the manifestation of the love of God, and that the end is the spiritual emancipation of the human race.

To the further question, How does Christ become the reconciler of men to God? I reply, by the truth which he reveals and by his method of revelation.

First—There is a revelation of the true character of God. God is love. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. He is our Father in heaven. He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He is a righteous being. His righteousness is declared in Christ. In Christ that righteousness is seen to be propitious to penitent sinners. This truth is arrayed against all false and inadequate ideas of God which prevail

among men. It makes war upon them. It scatters, confounds and consumes them. This is one mighty element in reconciliation, a true conception of the righteous God.

Second—There is in Christ a revelation of the essential relation of sonship between God and a human being, and of what God may become to a human being in the evolution of his life. Christ reveals the fact that we have our being in God, that we can live in the recognition of this fact and so become conscious of his power working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight. This truth is set in antagonism to all practical atheism, to all merely human, to all godless ideas and modes of living current in the world.

Third—There is, therefore, a revelation of the only life worthy of a human being, the life of trust in the unseen God. This truth concerning the only life worthy of man deepens and interprets the consciousness of sin, awakens the desire of freedom, discovers and condemns all those ideas of life which lead men into spiritual bondage. These are truths in the atonement in regard to which I am clear and certain.

But I would never separate the truths themselves from the method by which they are revealed: they are revealed through the whole personal history of the Incarnate Son of God; through his humble nativity; through his perfect obedience to his Father; through his doing and his suffering; through weariness and weakness; through his agony and bloody sweat; through his cross and passion; through his whole life, and through his death and resurrection. What the nature of God is; what he is essentially, and can become practically, to men; what kind of lives human beings ought to live,—are truths which appear as living realities in Jesus Christ. They are wrought out of his personal experience. Through a person, through a character, through a life,—a life in which there is untold sorrow, in which there is a death and a resurrection,—these truths about God and about man come forth and enter the mind and heart of the world. Thus they acquire their clearness and force, their divine beauty and splendor. Thus they gain their power over men. In and

through Christ, they become the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. The truth in reference to the nature and condition of man, which is pre-supposed in the mission and work of Christ, I recognize and hold. I believe that all men are sinners. They are in bondage. They need a deliverer. In the deliverance of men from their moral bondage the agency of the Holy Spirit is a necessity. I hold that without him no one can enter and no one can abide in the spiritual life.

On the dark and difficult topic of retribution a few things are clear to me. These I will state as plainly and as frankly as I can. They relate to the nature of retribution, to the duration of it, to a possible crisis in sinful experience, and to my own mental attitude with reference to the whole subject. What is the nature of the divine retributions? The nature of sin makes this evident. Sin consists in wrong spiritual relations. It is a denial of the claims of God and of man upon the individual spirit. It is practical atheism and inhumanity. It is moral disorder. It is a bad spiritual state, and the consciousness which accompanies that state is its punishment. Sin and punishment are linked together as cause and effect. The cause is a moral cause, the effect is a moral effect. The retributions of God are therefore moral retributions. The words eternal life and eternal punishment, I am fully persuaded, refer primarily to a certain kind, to a certain quality of being. But the question of duration cannot be suppressed. Therefore, the next point to be met is whether eternal punishment is also endless? I answer without reservation that it may be so. A soul may sin forever, and so be in a state of moral death forever. This I maintain as a clear possibility. It is a possibility to which all sinners are liable. They become more and more liable to it the longer they persist in wrong-doing. I assert, then, the possibility of everlasting punishment as a consequence of the possibility of everlasting sin. Whether there will be, as matter of fact, any who will sin forever, whether the possibility will be converted into a reality, is a question which I have no means of deciding. The

questions of possibility and of fact are, in my mind, distinct. The one I can answer, the other I cannot. I hold the same view in reference to the possibility of a crisis in the sinner's experience. If there is such a thing as the possible possession of an assured Christian character, the attainment of a fixed position in the divine righteousness, it is clear to me that there must be also a limit in the sinner's experience, beyond which he will remain steadfast in sin. This would be my conception of the final judgment. Moral life and moral death declare themselves in their final form. The processes of moral life and moral death are thus summed up and set forth.

To the question whether this world is the only place where human beings can leave unrighteousness for righteousness, the fellowship of devils for the fellowship of God and his Son, I can give no answer whatever. I do not know enough about the world to come to decide whether those who are impenitent at death remain so forever, or ultimately, through the discipline of woe, become partakers of Christ's life. I will say, however, that where men have steadfastly resisted light here, we have no reason to believe that they will not resist there; that, in view of our ignorance, all men should be led to feel that the question of eternal life and eternal death in point of duration, no less than quality of being, may be forever settled by the choice of the present hour.

To the further question as to what influence the fact of physical death may have upon the destiny of the sinful soul, I return no answer. It may have much. It may have none at all. As my mental attitude in reference to the whole question, I would say that I intend to assert the laws of righteousness as found in the Bible and in human experience. I would hold forth eternal life as an infinite and unutterable good, as a good that is in peril every hour throughout mortal existence, as a good that may be lost finally and forever, whose loss is spiritual perdition, confirmed practical atheism and inhumanity. Further, I shall earnestly endeavor to keep my mind free from opinions where I think the facts of Scripture and of life warrant none. In reference to many aspects of

this and other questions touching the divine administration of the world, I believe that the mental habit of suspense is rational, healthy, fruitful of much peace, and an indispensable safeguard against the waste of intellectual and spiritual power.

Finally I profess myself an inquirer, a student of the things of God and the life of man. Christ and his Scriptures are my supreme authority and guide. I count not myself to have apprehended the divine meaning of life. It is a vast continent on whose shores I stand. I feel the power of its sublime attractions upon my spirit. I would press on into it eagerly, gladly, solemnly and reverently, with those whom God may give me as my spiritual companions, my fellow-travellers and fellow-explorers among the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In the account of the proceedings in the *Boston Journal*, it is said:—

"This statement was read with a slight accent, slowly, and without any attempt whatever at oratorical display, marked emphasis being laid, however, upon some passages, especially such as expressed the weakness of human knowledge, and the willingness to remain in ignorance of that which cannot be revealed. It was listened to with a deep and absorbing interest."

The MODERATOR: Brethren,—It is usual to hear in connection with a statement similar to this, or at some other time, the personal experience of the candidate. We have heard from the Church that he has made such a statement to the Church. Is it your pleasure that he make such a statement now to the Council? Is there any objection to that, brethren? (No objection being made, the Moderator added:) Brother Gordon, will you make a statement of your personal experience?

Mr. GORDON: I was born into the belief that there is a God, and that the world is his. I had no religious interest in him, and no religious interest in men, until between twelve and

thirteen years ago. At that time I think I entered into the religious life, into a personal recognition of him as my Father and Saviour and Sanctifier. I would mention two facts in reference to my religious experience in addition to the date of it, which may be of interest to the Council: First,—Its meagreness in point of quality and of quantity at its beginning; and another fact,—to me very cheering,—that its development has been constant, and at times the development has been decided—in my senior year in the seminary for one instance, and throughout my whole college life. My present attitude is this, that the view proposed to me by the Lord Jesus Christ, of human life and human destiny, is the only thing that redeems human life from being a burden and a curse; that Christ to me personally, and as far as I am related to men, is the hope of the world.

The MODERATOR: At the time you speak of,—excuse me for the question,—at the time you speak of as entering into this life, can you tell the Council in particular any new views that you had of your heart, or of Christ and his word?

Mr. GORDON: I came into a practical recognition of what I had always believed. It was not new views, but new life, a new adjustment of my life to what I had been taught in boyhood, and what I had heard from the pulpit.

At this point the public proceedings of the Council might well have been brought to a close. The occasion had been one of great spiritual impressiveness, and it would have been well if this high level of religious feeling could have been maintained. As stated in the official record of the Council, which bears the signatures of the Moderator and Scribe, the Council had assembled "to listen to reports of the action of the Old South Church and Society in calling the Rev. George A. Gordon to become their pastor, to listen to a statement of the religious belief of the pastor-

elect, and to engage in services of installation." It now only remained, therefore, for the members of the Council to decide in private session whether they were willing to continue in fellowship with the Old South Church, and whether they would assist it in the installation of the pastor of its choice. If any of them desired for their own satisfaction to ask him one or more questions, they could invite him to the private session for that purpose. It has been said that the Committee of Arrangements should not have allowed the cross-examination to go forward; but neither the Committee nor the pastor-elect had anything to conceal, and both desired to treat the representatives of the churches with the utmost frankness and consideration. The result showed the wisdom of this course, for the answers of Mr. Gordon were so prompt, so keen, so felicitous, and, withal, so courteous to his examiners, that the favorable impression made by them upon the majority of the Council, upon the audience, and upon the Christian public, was hardly, if at all, less marked than that produced by his carefully prepared written statement.

CROSS-EXAMINATION.

The Council proceeded to a public cross-examination, but five-sixths of the members declined to take any part in it.

The MODERATOR: Brother Gordon, what is your authority for preaching the Gospel?

Mr. GORDON: Christ said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." I consider myself a disciple of Christ, and therefore as coming under that command.

The MODERATOR: And the Gospel you are to preach, the authority is the Scriptures? I should like to have you explain a little more as to the objective side of the Gospel. The subjective side, I understood you to set forth quite clearly and distinctly, but as to the objective side of the Gospel, as for instance, to keep very close to the Scriptures, suppose we start with this idea: Paul says in the beginning of the eighth chapter of Romans, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," setting forth very clearly the fact that there is condemnation to those who are not in Christ Jesus. Now, in your apprehension of the Apostle, what did he set forth as the means by which men are delivered from sin and the condemnation in which they are, into this condition where there is no condemnation?

Mr. GORDON: The power of the Holy Spirit through the teaching and life and death and whole work of Christ.

The MODERATOR: The power of the Holy Spirit is a subjective work, in your apprehension, is it not?

Mr. GORDON: No, sir, because it is not concerned with me or my brother who sits next to me, but other Christians.

The MODERATOR: That is so, of course, but it is concerned upon all hearts.

Mr. GORDON: I understand your question, sir, now, I think. I think that the Apostle in that whole epistle is displaying the righteousness of God which is declared in Jesus Christ.

The MODERATOR: And take that other passage in which he says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." What do you make of that? Where does that come in, in your theory?

Mr. GORDON: In this way, that the truth of God's character, the truth of his relation to his human children who have fallen into sin, the truth of the only right life for his human children,—these three truths are all declared in the Saviour of the world; and Paul has in mind, in my judgment, in that passage to which you have referred, the consummation of the revelation of God's redeeming love in the death of Christ.

The MODERATOR: Yes; I am not quite sure I understand; but perhaps I can bring my meaning out in a different way. Take that passage concerning propitiation. Has the atonement made by the Saviour any relation to justice?

Mr. GORDON: Not as considered apart from righteousness, but as a declaration of righteousness, I believe that it is most essential; that it is a declaration of the righteousness of God, as Paul says.

The MODERATOR: In what would that righteousness consist?

Mr. GORDON: The very being of the Eternal God.

The MODERATOR: Is Paul's teaching there in regard to the being or to the action?

Mr. GORDON: I think, sir, he is speaking of a revelation of the very being of God; that God is a righteous Being, and that he is seen to be so in the whole work of Christ.

The MODERATOR: Is that on the surface? There may be some hidden meaning in it which I do not understand. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." It seems to be an act.

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir, but I do not distinguish between Christ and God metaphysically. I believe that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself; if, therefore, Christ is a Redeemer, God is a Redeemer, and whatever Christ does, God does. I do not distinguish between the propitiation which Christ makes and that which God offers in Christ.

The MODERATOR: Well, has the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ any relation to the law or the penalty of the law?

Mr. GORDON: It has, and most emphatically, I should say, for righteousness is law, and sin is a violation of the law, and God sent his Son into the world to deliver it from lawlessness, and to establish the eternal laws of righteousness.

The MODERATOR: That hardly meets the point I have in mind; but to go back to Paul's assertion, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." That condemnation implies personal guilt in your apprehension, does it not?

Mr. GORDON: Certainly, sir.

The MODERATOR: And guilt is what?

Mr. GORDON: That consciousness which accompanies wrong relations to God and to man.

The MODERATOR: Yes, that is part of it, very clearly; that is to say, that is the inherent sense of ill desert in us; but at the same time, does not guilt involve something external?

Mr. GORDON: I cannot see that it involves anything more external than that.

The MODERATOR: For instance, take this young Berner, who has been the cause of such a riot in Cincinnati. Now, when he murdered that man in the stable there was in him a sense of ill desert, — I do not know whether there was or not, but that is what we would suppose there would be in you and me, an inherent sense of ill desert, guilt, something attaching to me, something I cannot get rid of; and does he not, at the same time, make himself liable to penalty, and does not every act of sin bind a man to some kind of penalty, to a fine, or imprisonment, or death?

Mr. GORDON: I understand your question, sir, very clearly now, and I take the ground very firmly that the analogies drawn from human government with reference to the divine government, do not in any degree satisfy my mind, and I do not hold that such an analogy illustrates even the relations which a spiritual being has to a spiritual act; that all penalties whatsoever which are visited upon the sinner, in my judgment, are spiritual penalties.

The MODERATOR: Of course. I do not mean to imply in my question that they are material, but I only mean to illustrate by human government, which, I suppose, is a transcript, as far as necessary in this world, of the divine government. I have understood it so. Do you not understand it so?

Mr. GORDON: If it is, I hope that it is a very great modification of it.

The MODERATOR: I do not care to go further.

The Moderator then proceeded to call the roll of the churches in the Council, that their representatives might put such questions as they desired. The Park Street Church was the first on the list, the Rev. Dr. Withrow, pastor.

Dr. WITHROW: Mr. Gordon, you said you did not distinguish between Christ and God. Do I understand you do not distinguish between Christ and God?

Mr. GORDON: I mean, sir, that in the consideration of the deepest nature of the atonement, I would always try to remember that Christ is God.

Dr. WITHROW: Do you make any three-fold distinction in the Deity?

Mr. GORDON: Oh, yes, sir.

Dr. WITHROW: In which personal action and affections inhere?

Mr. GORDON: Well, sir, I would not explore the depths of the divine nature further than those depths are revealed to me in Scripture. I call my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Dr. WITHROW: Do you call the Son, God?

Mr. GORDON: I do.

Dr. WITHROW: And you call the Spirit, God?

Mr. GORDON: I do.

Dr. WITHROW: And you separate them in their several acts?

Mr. GORDON: I am not very careful to separate them. I recognize in the Godhead a mystery which I am to confess and which I am to learn from, but which I am not to pretend to explore.

Dr. WITHROW: Do not the Scriptures distinguish and separate between them?

Mr. GORDON: I think they do practically, yes, and so far I would separate them; but the same Scriptures also unite them.

Dr. WITHROW: In some places they do, but that is not inconsistent with the fact that they do separate them in other places, especially as when our Lord does so himself between himself and the Divine Spirit? You recognize not only the Eternal Son as God before the incarnation, but as the true God, in the incarnation?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. WITHROW: I did not quite understand your statement in respect to the Scriptures, and Christ's revelation of himself;—the work of Christ consisted in what?

Mr. GORDON: In the revelation of truth and in the method of revelation. You refer, sir, to what I said about reconciliation, that in trying to account for reconciliation and trying to account for the fact, which I confess, I said that it was the truth revealed through a person, a divine person.

Dr. WITHROW: How do you connect the work of the Son with the sacrificial system preceding it?

Mr. GORDON: The sacrificial system preceding it seems to be all built upon the fact that God is already propitious, and that the sacrificial system is a confession that he needs no propitiation.

Dr. WITHROW: Why did he require them to bring the sacrifice, if he was already propitious?

Mr. GORDON: I think I draw this distinction between heathen sacrifices and the sacrifices which I find in the Scriptures, that whereas the heathen thought they were going to bring their gods round into a favorable condition towards them, the Scriptures always set forth, in my judgment, the fact that God is brought round.

Dr. WITHROW: What, then, was the necessity, if God was already propitious, that his Son should offer himself a sacrifice to satisfy justice, or offer himself in a propitiatory sense? Three or four times we have the word "propitiation" through Jesus Christ as a sacrifice.

Mr. GORDON: Will you quote, sir, any passage in which it is said that Christ propitiated the Divine Justice as a legal satisfaction? If you will, it will help me out of the difficulty.[1]

Dr. WITHROW: "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." There is that passage.

Mr. GORDON: Dr. Withrow, (I will beg his pardon,) referred to several passages of Scripture in which Christ is spoken of as being a propitiation to Divine Justice, and I ask him to refresh my memory with a passage.

Dr. WITHROW: "Propitiation" also occurs, if you will remember it, in the prayer of the publican. When he offered his prayer he used the same word, in his own language.

Mr. GORDON: "God be merciful to me a sinner"?

Dr. WITHROW: Yes, but the language in which it was written first.

Mr. GORDON: Will you be kind enough to repeat it?

Dr. WITHROW: It is "propitiation" again, sir.

Mr. GORDON: Well, I have no difficulty at all with this word. Christ is the declaration to me that God is propitious towards me as a sinner.

Dr. WITHROW: Suppose he had not died on the cross, God being already propitious, would our salvation be equally secure?

Mr. GORDON: We should never have known it.

Dr. WITHROW: But, I say, would it, in your judgment, he being propitious, have been true that we all should have been saved, if Christ had not died?

Mr. GORDON: I do not think a sinner can be saved without a knowledge of a Saviour, and that the Lord, in order to give

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1 Dr. Withrow made a remark, *sotto voce*, to the effect that at a recent examination for installation, the candidate was said to have examined the Council. He was understood to refer to the comment of an influential religious paper, in reporting the proceedings of a Council called for the installation of a certain distinguished clergyman, that it was difficult at times for one looking on to decide whether the Council was examining the candidate, or the candidate was examining the Council.

him that knowledge, became incarnate, and thus the incarnation was necessary.

Dr. WITHROW: Do you think that all sinners must really know Christ personally before they can be saved?

Mr. GORDON: I should take that in a large sense, sir. I do not think that it is necessary for all. I think the Gospel has reference not simply to individuals, but to a race redemption. When I speak of the incarnation, God in Christ, that the work of Christ was necessary for the salvation of man, I mean a racial redemption.

Dr. WITHROW: Would you speak of their having to know Christ in order to be saved?

Mr. GORDON: Well, as a general proposition, I would say, they must know him first. We are told, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

Dr. WITHROW: Then, would you say in the same way that all mankind before Christ's incarnation knew Christ as their Saviour?

Mr. GORDON: Not as the historic Christ, but they knew him as the redeeming God, as many of them as were partakers of his redemption.

Dr. WITHROW: How is it that God gave his only begotten Son, if it was God dying? That passage of Scripture seems to represent an act and its effect upon another.

Mr. GORDON: If you ask for my idea of that passage, I should say that it sets forth two facts, the love of God with reference to men, and their contemplated redemption. God so loved the world that he gave his Son, to secure the world's redemption.

Dr. WITHROW: Then the High-Priesthood of Christ you think is figurative, do you, rather than actual?

Mr. GORDON: No, sir. I think Christ is the true High Priest.

Dr. Withrow declining to ask any more questions, the Moderator called upon the delegate from Park Street Church, Boston, Deacon Ezra Farnsworth.

Mr. FARNSWORTH: No question.

The MODERATOR: Union Church, Boston, the Rev. Dr. Meredith, pastor.

Dr. MEREDITH: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon O. S. Sanders, delegate.

Dr. SANDERS: No question.

The MODERATOR: Berkeley Street Church, Boston, the Rev. W. B. Wright, pastor.

Mr. WRIGHT: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon S. B. Pratt, delegate.

Mr. PRATT: No question.

The MODERATOR: Central Church, Boston, the Rev. Dr. Duryea, pastor.

Dr. DURYEA: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon J. N. Denison, delegate.

Mr. DENISON: No question.

The MODERATOR: Mt. Vernon Church, Boston, the Rev. Dr. Herrick, pastor.

Dr. HERRICK: No question:

The MODERATOR: Deacon Andrew Cushing, delegate.

Mr. CUSHING: No question.

The MODERATOR: Shawmut Church, Boston, Brother M. F. Dickinson, Jr., delegate.

Mr. DICKINSON: No question.

The MODERATOR: Phillips Church, South Boston, the Rev. F. E. Clark, pastor.

Mr. CLARK: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Calvin W. Angier, delegate.

Mr. ANGIER: No question.

The MODERATOR: Second Church, Dorchester, the Rev. E. N. Packard, pastor.

Mr. PACKARD. I would like to ask a question with relation to the experience of an ordinary person who comes under what we call "conviction of sin." If a person comes to you, Brother Gordon, and he says that he feels profoundly his sins and his guilt in the sight of God, (if I understood your paper aright you represented the work of Christ as simply that of a deliverer from sin,) but the person in those circumstances I refer to might say, "I want more than a deliverance from sin. I feel I am guilty, and I want more than merely a purpose to do well in the future. My heart is conscious of guilt in the sight of God. What shall I do with my past sins?" Now, how would you answer such a person?

Mr. GORDON: I should answer him by telling him to trust his whole past with the mercy of God as disclosed in Christ.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Mr. Cutler, delegate.

Mr. CUTLER: No question.

The MODERATOR: Village Church, Dorchester, the Rev. S. P. Fay, pastor.

Mr. FAY: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Reuben Swan, delegate.

Mr. SWAN: No question.

The MODERATOR: Pilgrim Church, Dorchester, the Rev. J. W. Ballantine, pastor.

Mr. BALLANTINE: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother W. C. Greene, delegate.

Mr. GREENE: No question.

The MODERATOR: Evangelical Congregational Church, Brighton, the Rev. W. H. Leavell, pastor.

Mr. LEAVELL: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Charles S. Cook, delegate.

Mr. COOK: No question.

The MODERATOR: Eliot Church, Roxbury, the Rev. Dr. Thompson, senior pastor.

Dr. THOMPSON: I think the Council would like to know the views of our brother in regard to church polity and sacraments.

Mr. GORDON: The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were given us by our Saviour. He himself was baptised, and the baptism was a sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit even upon him. That gives us a thought of what it may mean in regard to his disciples. Baptism was used by his followers, and was administered to believers and their families, their households, and it was a sign that they had entered into a new life through belief in him as their Saviour. That is my construction of it. The Lord's Supper brings before his Church, the atoning work which is consummated in his death, to remind us evermore of what he has done for us, and of the communion in spirit which we should hold with him. In regard to polity, I believe that a man has a right to any polity that he chooses, Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, or Episcopalian. I do not find any distinct outline, distinct body of ecclesiastical polity in the New Testament.

Dr. THOMPSON: Do you understand the Scriptures to teach the existence of a personal Satan?

Mr. GORDON: I think there are a great many of them. As to a supreme head, I am not clear on that point. I am not able to answer the question, sir.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. B. F. Hamilton, of the Eliot Church.

Mr. HAMILTON: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon Charles W. Hill, delegate.

Mr. HILL: No question.

The MODERATOR: Immanuel Church, Roxbury, the Rev. M. Burnham, pastor.

Mr. BURNHAM: I would like to ask one question with reference to miracles, if they are a necessary part of the Gospel system?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir. I think the miracle of the incarnation, and the other miracle of the resurrection, are essential parts of that revelation, for example, which is made to us through Jesus Christ; and what holds true in regard to those two, I should extend to the system of revelation.

Mr. BURNHAM: I only want to ask one other question with reference to punishment. I would like to know your view upon this point, whether God punishes a sinner, or whether he punishes himself?

Mr. GORDON: I think, sir, that you might state it either way. God has made the conditions of the spiritual life for all rational beings everywhere, and if these are transgressed, in one sense he punishes the sinner, and in another sense the sinner punishes himself.

The MODERATOR: Deacon Joseph S. Ropes, delegate.

Mr. ROPES: No question.

The MODERATOR: Highland Church, Roxbury, the Rev. W. R. Campbell, pastor.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Was Jesus Christ a complete man as we are, as a human being?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir, that is, I believe in the complete humanity of Christ.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Was he a complete man?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Did the *man*, Christ Jesus, rise from the dead?

Mr. GORDON: The personal Christ Jesus rose from the dead.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Did the *man* rise from the dead?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, I would accept that statement, that the *man*, Christ Jesus, rose from the dead.

Mr. CAMPBELL: As an individual?

Mr. GORDON: As an individual.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Does the *man*, Christ Jesus, live eternally?

Mr. GORDON: When I am asked questions in reference to the relation which Christ sustains to God now, I should be very humble in my answer. The Son of God is eternally a Son of God, the Father is eternally a Father, and the Spirit eternally a Spirit. I should rest in some such general statement as that.

Mr. CAMPBELL: In your mind, would the personal human life of Christ, his death and resurrection as a personal human being, necessitate his eternal existence?

Mr. GORDON: As distinct from God, individually, no; I cannot believe that, because I never believed him to have been distinct from God. I believe that God in Christ enters into humanity.

The MODERATOR: Deacon John C. Proctor, delegate.

Mr. PROCTOR: No question.

The MODERATOR: Walnut Avenue Church, Roxbury, the Rev. Dr. Plumb, pastor.

Dr. PLUMB: In regard to your view of the Scriptures, I think you said you believed in a progressive revelation, that in one age they obtained larger conceptions than in others. I want to know whether the early revelations that are made by the writers in the Bible are merely incomplete, or are wrong in substance.

Mr. GORDON: So far as I have been able to study the Old Testament, (I have only studied it a few years,) I should say that the revelations of God made there are simply partial, incomplete, and that they are not erroneous as far as they go.

Dr. PLUMB: So in regard to the apostles, what would you say of such a statement as this, that either Matthew misrepresented, or Christ was mistaken? Do you hold any such view as that? You said Christ's authority was supreme. How would you get at it?

Mr. GORDON: Well, sir, my general theory would be that "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," and we must even accept the revelation of God through imperfect men.

Dr. PLUMB: Well, your definition of the inspiration by which the writers of the Bible were guided would save you from any such alternative as that, that they misrepresented Christ, on an important statement?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. PLUMB: So that your view of Christ's omniscience and Deity would prevent your saying he was mistaken in any important religious statement he made?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. PLUMB: Do you suppose the later epistles contradict the former?

Mr. GORDON : I never supposed they did.

Dr. PLUMB : Progressive revelation, then, supplements rather than supplants. You take the Bible as a whole as God's word.

Mr. GORDON : God's word.

Dr. PLUMB : On all religious subjects you can trust it?

Mr. GORDON : I can trust it.

Dr. PLUMB : On one question I did not quite get your idea, how Christ is a High Priest. What is his general relation to the Priesthood?

Mr. GORDON : The High Priest was himself chosen from among men in things pertaining unto God, and he must have certain qualifications. He must be called of God and chosen from among men. Christ was. He was called of God. It was in reference to things concerning God, and Christ's whole work was in reference to things concerning God and the men from among whom he was chosen ; therefore he was the High Priest.

Dr. PLUMB : Do you make any distinction between Christ as a Prophet or Teacher and Christ as a Priest?

Mr. GORDON : I have just stated what a priest was and what his priesthood is.

Dr. PLUMB : As I understand your statement, Brother Gordon, as to what Christ does in reconciling men and being a Saviour, it would seem that you confine it simply to his prophetic or teaching office ; he reveals God through us, makes us know how good God is. What would you do with such a passage as Hebrews ix. 24 : "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Why is he in there for us?

Mr. GORDON : Christ is in there as the representative of humanity. However, I must say this, that in such a question, I do not believe that it is possible for me to explain a single passage taken from the whole epistle to the Hebrews. It seems to me that the whole epistle goes together ; that I must make a statement of my belief without explanation ; that the

epistle represents Christ as chosen and constituted by God so as to effect the redemption of the human race.

Dr. PLUMB: I have been laboring to get your idea; it may be my fault altogether, but I would like very much to have you explain this, if you will be so kind, what it is that Christ does for us. Take such a passage as Romans iii. 25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," in order "that he might be just." Now, according to this, Christ was set forth to be a propitiation, in order that God might be just in forgiving the sinner. Is not that something more than to reveal God to us?

Mr. GORDON: I do not hold, sir, that that word is used in our legal sense; it is righteousness, I believe, and that the whole work of Christ was a revelation of the righteousness of God; and I would say it was the nature of the righteousness of God to deliver men from the spiritual bondage in which it finds them.

Dr. PLUMB: Now this question perhaps will bring it out: Does the effect of Christ's sacrifice on the cross operate upon any one other than the sinner? You say it reveals to the sinner, makes him know more, but does it have any effect on any other being? Does it remove any obstacles that would exist, except in his own consciousness?

Mr. GORDON: I cannot find the view countenanced, as I read the New Testament, that God is propitiated by the death of Christ, that is, made favorable to man. I distinctly reject that view; but as I read the Bible, it is a procession of the heart of God out towards man, and the difficulties in any individual text in the way must be explained in reference to what I recognize as the general trend of the Scripture, that God's nature goes out through Christ, and through his work, for the redemption of sinners. God does not change himself in his appearance in Christ.

Dr. PLUMB: What I am trying to ascertain is, whether, when Christ suffered for us on the cross, he did anything

except something that should affect our hearts; whether there was any work in any other way?

Mr. GORDON: I would go this length, that God gratified himself in the expression of his redeeming love for man; but, I understand your question to mean this, sir,—did Christ propitiate God by his death? Is that your question, sir?

Dr. PLUMB: Yes, if you will not interpret "propitiate" in the sense that he did not love us. He loved us, but there were difficulties in the way of manifesting his love, so Christ removed those difficulties. Is that your idea?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, I should say that the love of God in Christ overcame all difficulties.

Dr. PLUMB: I believe you have not spoken at all upon the prospects of the Church. It is your hope that the gospel will prevail through the world, that the world shall be converted to God?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, that is my hope, sir.

Dr. PLUMB: Another practical point. Do you suppose that a minister in a large city has a duty in regard to the fashionable drinking usages of polite society, that he ought to express himself against them?

Mr. GORDON: I think a man ought to stand by the imperishable word of God and declare himself fully and freely, directly and affectionately, to his people upon every subject upon which he has spiritual convictions.

Dr. PLUMB: But upon that subject we would like to know what your spiritual convictions are?

Mr. GORDON: Will you be kind enough to specify an individual point?

Dr. PLUMB: Well, sir, all the leading ministers in New York took it upon themselves in their pulpits to express themselves to their people discountenancing the habit of offering wine on New Year's Day. Do you think that is a legitimate use of a pastor's influence?

Mr. GORDON: I do not drink wine myself, and I should speak on that subject as I should upon any other subject.

The MODERATOR: Brother G. H. Davenport, delegate from the Highland Avenue Church.

Mr. DAVENPORT: No question.

The MODERATOR: South Evangelical Church, West Roxbury, the Rev. C. A. Beckwith, pastor.

Mr. BECKWITH: No question.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Clark, delegate.

Dr. CLARK: Is there any real spiritual life except through the agency of the Holy Spirit?

Mr. GORDON: No sir. I said in my paper that without him no one can enter and no one can abide in spiritual life.

Dr. CLARK: I merely wanted to know whether you meant spiritual life through culture alone without the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit?

Mr. GORDON: I do not believe there is any spiritual life without a recognition of God, and of the enormity of sin.

Dr. CLARK: Does God express his abhorrence of sin in the sufferings of Christ in any way?

Mr. GORDON: I think most emphatically he does declare his utter abhorrence and eternal war against it.

Dr. CLARK: That then you regard as an expression of the enormity of sin.

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. CLARK: In regard to Foreign Missions and Home Missions, what do you regard the duty of the Church to be in regard to the work at home and abroad?

Mr. GORDON: To push both as fast as it can.

The MODERATOR: Central Church, Jamaica Plain, the Rev. G. M. Boynton, pastor.

Mr. BOYNTON: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon S. B. Capen, delegate.

Mr. CAPEN: No question.

The MODERATOR: Boylston Congregational Church, Jamaica Plain, the Rev. S. S. Mathews, pastor.

Mr. MATHEWS: I have been exceedingly interested in the brief statement which our brother made concerning his religious experience, and would be very glad if he would be

kind enough to tell us what was his experience concerning the subject of sin, in that change of will to which he has referred; whether there was a conscious change of his mental attitude.

Mr. GORDON: My thought of sin is, it is a wrong spiritual state, an utterly unfit thing, that has no business to be in my life or any body else's life.

Mr. MATHEWS: Yes, I did not intend the question in quite such an objective way, but personally in your own experience.

Mr. GORDON: I have just said that it seemed to me personally it had no business to be in my life.

Mr. MATHEWS: What are your views, in a word, upon total depravity?

Mr. GORDON: I should say, that as every man needs a whole Saviour for himself, so every part of him needs a whole redemption.

Mr. MATHEWS: Would you say that until he has a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ he is wholly sinful?

Mr. GORDON: Well, in the narrow sense of that, sir, I would not say so. We might find a man in the slums of our city who was led by the working of the Holy Spirit into a recognition of God, and yet had never read the New Testament.

Mr. MATHEWS: And that he might have—

Mr. GORDON: Personal relationship to Christ.

Mr. MATHEWS: Might have a real knowledge of Christ?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

The MODERATOR: Deacon G. E. S. Kinney, delegate from the Boylston Church.

Mr. KINNEY: No question.

The MODERATOR: Harvard Church, Brookline, the Rev. Dr. Thomas, pastor.

Dr. THOMAS: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon H. S. Burdett, delegate.

Mr. BURDETT: No question.

The MODERATOR: First Church, Cambridge, the Rev. Dr. McKenzie, pastor.

Dr. McKENZIE: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother J. M. W. Hall, delegate.

Mr. HALL: No question.

The MODERATOR: North Avenue Church, Cambridge, the Rev. C. F. Thwing, pastor.

Mr. THWING: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon Wm. Fox Richardson, delegate.

Mr. RICHARDSON: No question.

The MODERATOR: First Church, Charlestown, the Rev. G. W. Brooks, pastor.

Mr. BROOKS: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon Anthony S. Morss, delegate.

Mr. MORSS: No question.

The MODERATOR: Winthrop Church, Charlestown, the Rev. Dr. Twombly, pastor.

Dr. TWOMBLY: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother C. E. Rogers, delegate.

Mr. ROGERS: No question.

The MODERATOR: First Church, Somerville, the Rev. Dr. Merriman, pastor.

Dr. MERRIMAN: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Edward C. Porter, delegate.

Mr. PORTER: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Rufus S. Frost, delegate from the First Church, Chelsea.

Mr. FROST: I would like to inquire of Brother Gordon what first drew his attention to the gospel ministry?

Mr. GORDON: I would make a general statement, sir, in regard to that. First, I believe that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Every one of God's people should serve him in that capacity for which he thinks he is best fitted. I came to the conclusion I ought to serve him in the ministry, having become a believer in Christ.

Mr. FROST: Had you Christian parents?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

The MODERATOR: First Church, Newton Centre, the Rev. T. J. Holmes, pastor.

Mr. HOLMES: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother George P. Davis, delegate.

Mr. DAVIS: No question.

The MODERATOR: Second Church, West Newton, the Rev. H. J. Patrick, pastor.

Mr. PATRICK: No question.

The MODERATOR: Deacon H. P. Barber, delegate.

Mr. BARBER: No question.

The MODERATOR: Eliot Church, Newton, Brother Geo. C. Dunne, delegate.

Mr. DUNNE: No question.

The MODERATOR: Hancock Church, Lexington, the Rev. E. G. Porter, pastor.

Mr. PORTER: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother George W. Berry, delegate.

Mr. BERRY: No question.

The MODERATOR: Kirk Street Church, Lowell, the Rev. C. A. Dickinson, Pastor.

Mr. DICKINSON: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother Jacob Rogers, delegate.

Mr. ROGERS: No question.

The MODERATOR: South Church, Salem, the Rev. Dr. Atwood, pastor.

Dr. ATWOOD: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother J. C. Osgood, delegate.

Mr. OSGOOD: No question.

The MODERATOR: The delegate from the Greenwich (Conn.) Congregational Church, Deacon Charles Mead.

Mr. MEAD: No question.

The MODERATOR: The other delegate from the Greenwich Church, Brother L. P. Hubbard:

Mr. HUBBARD: Having heard Mr. Gordon three years, I am perfectly satisfied.[1]

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1 When the Council was in private session, the delegates from the Greenwich Church bore still more emphatic testimony to the character and influence of Mr. Gordon's ministry there; and the Rev. Mr. Fitz, pastor of the Church in Temple, Maine, over which Mr. Gordon was settled immediately on leaving the Seminary, told the Council, that in his own work he was constantly feeling the beneficial influences of that pastorate.

The MODERATOR: High Street Church, Portland, Maine, the Rev. W. H. Fenn, pastor.

Mr. FENN: No question.

The MODERATOR: Brother James B. Libby, delegate.

Mr. LIBBY: No question.

The MODERATOR: The Congregational Church, Temple, Maine, the Rev. A. G. Fitz, pastor.

Mr. FITZ: No question.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Blagden of New York.

Dr. BLAGDEN: I came, sir, saying to myself, "I won't ask a question," but there are two that I should like now to ask. The first is, how our brother would interpret the words of our Lord, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"?

Mr. GORDON: I do not know, sir, that I could, in a statement of my own, put the truth so strongly as that, that whoever believes on Christ passes from a state of condemnation into a state of life, and that those who do not so pass remain in that state of condemnation, and that the wrath of God does abide on them.

Dr. BLAGDEN: What would you say in regard to the incidental expressions in the New Testament respecting the future state of those who do not believe? The passage that I have cited is one. There are others; "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." The word *aionios* in the Greek is in both places. What would you say in reference to the two interpretations of *aionios?*

Mr. GORDON: I should say, in the first instance, that the word refers to a kind of existence, in the case of the good, a good kind of existence; in the case of the bad, a bad kind of existence, and that that text does not touch, except incidentally, the question of the endless duration of these two states which it signifies.

Dr. BLAGDEN: Well, take another expression of our Lord, the "fire that shall not be quenched."

Mr. GORDON: I mean, sir, to be distinctly understood as asserting the possibility of eternal punishment, endless punishment, and I should refer, sir, all those passages to the assertion of the possibility of endless estrangement from Christ.

Dr. BLAGDEN: You think it is possible?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. BLAGDEN: The other question I would like to ask is in reference to that remarkable passage in the third chapter of Romans, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation" for sin "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Why was faith in his blood necessary to render him just in the justification of them that believe in Jesus?

Mr. GORDON: Well, sir, I believe that that is a very glorious passage, but I cannot think that "blood" is the emphatic word, although the righteousness of God is declared *through* the blood. It seems to me that the prominent thought in that passage which you quote, sir, is the righteousness of God in which the sinner, believing, finds redemption.

Dr. BLAGDEN: How would you interpret in that relation the song of the redeemed in Heaven, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kingdom, and tongue, and people, and nation"?

Mr. GORDON: I should say that the altar phraseology extends from one end of the Scriptures to the other, and I would not for the world read it in any other way. The blood seems to me to symbolize the sacrificial life of Christ throughout the whole New Testament.

Dr. BLAGDEN: Well, does that blood only develop the righteousness of God, or does it have an effect on the mind and heart and life of man as he looks at that blood shed?

Mr. GORDON: I should say, sir, in strict terms that the spiritual sacrifice of Christ, in and through the sacrifice of his body, was the thing which had effect on the sinner's heart.

Dr. BLAGDEN: How would you interpret the text in John, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"?

Mr. GORDON: John was a Jew, and was speaking to Jews, and employed that term as he employed the term "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," to shadow forth the sacrifice which Christ had offered once for all.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Tucker, of Andover.

Dr. TUCKER: No question.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Barbour, of New Haven.

Dr. BARBOUR: I will ask a question or two to give Mr. Gordon a chance to explain himself. What is the trouble with the human race, that they are all sinners?

Mr. GORDON: I should refer it to an evil will.

Dr. BARBOUR: How did it come?

Mr. GORDON: It comes in two ways, by the connection of the individual with the race, and by the individual's own decision.

Dr. BARBOUR: How did it get into the race first?

Mr. GORDON: By the choice of the first man—or woman.

Dr. BARBOUR: That was what I wanted you to explain to the Council, not that I wanted to satisfy myself. Will you dilate a little on that? Will you give us a little sketch of the history of sin?

Mr. GORDON: Well, sir, I do not go very far back in the history of it practically. I look upon individuals as connected with their parents, and their parents with their parents, and so on, a racial connection which seems to me to explain one side of sin, running back to the very roots of the race. It seems to me that every man who lives runs back into the roots of the race in our first parents, and that is one explanation. The other is the individual's own sin.

Dr. BARBOUR: Do you think our first parent made several righteous choices before he made the bad one? It is only a speculation, I know, but it is on the exercise of the will.

Mr. GORDON: I think we are told he had communion with God previous to the fall. I do not remember exactly now the statement.

Dr. BARBOUR: Well, made "in the image of God."

Mr. GORDON: Yes, I understand your question now, sir. I believe, sir, that man's original constitution was in the image of God, and I should say that previous to the fall there was decidedly a state to which man is brought back by the work of grace.

Dr. BARBOUR: Now, I have one question more on this matter of doom, and that is, Do you think our Lord Jesus Christ brought any intelligence from God concerning the duration of future punishment?

Mr. GORDON: I think that the teaching of Jesus Christ is confined to the assertion of the possibility of the endlessness of sin and punishment.

Dr. BARBOUR: It is not, in your judgment, in his gospel that he has declared that certain men shall not see life?

Mr. GORDON: No, sir, it is not. I will say further, Professor Barbour, I consider the two questions perfectly distinct, and that upon one question I have most decided opinions, and on the other question I have no opinion at all.

Dr. BARBOUR: That is all. I wondered if I could aid you in this matter, and wanted to give you a chance to express yourself. Will you say there is a distinction in your mind between God's relation as a Father and Redeemer, as you put it, to the individual soul, and God's relation to a universal moral agency, towards which universe he pays some respect in his administrative acts?

Mr. GORDON: I do not accept that at all.

Dr. BARBOUR: You do not think there is anything like a law as a general principle?

Mr. GORDON: I do, but it is righteousness.

Dr. BARBOUR: Do you believe that there is a system of law?

Mr. GORDON: Well, I could not say unless I am allowed to say what kind of law? I believe that God governs me by the same principle which he applies to all other rational beings.

Dr. BARBOUR: You believe in right and wrong?

Mr. GORDON: Yes, sir.

Dr. BARBOUR: Does not God pay some public respect to the great principle of right and wrong?

Mr. GORDON: I do not know what is understood by "public respect." All God's dealings are in a spiritual way.

Dr. BARBOUR: Well, to make some demonstration of his interest.

Mr. GORDON: I think that the analogy, the governmental notion of punishing human beings for transgressions against the rights of personal property, does not apply to the divine government, because it is spiritual, and operates constantly, and searches all men, and that the respect which God pays to right and wrong he pays in the conscience of every man.

Dr. BARBOUR: Very well, I did not help you much.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Tarbox, of West Newton.

Dr. TARBOX: No question.

The MODERATOR: The Rev. Dr. Stoddard, of New York.

Dr. STODDARD: No question.

CONCLUSION.

At the close of the cross-examination the Council voted to be by itself, and after the withdrawal of the congregation, it spent upwards of two hours in the discussion of various questions relating to the pastor-elect and his doctrinal belief. It at length came to a vote upon the question submitted to it in the letter-missive under which it had been convened, namely, whether or not the churches represented would participate in, and now proceed to the services of installation. On this question, which was decided by a rising vote, there were forty-eight in the affirmative and sixteen in the negative.[1] It might have been supposed that the

[1] Dr. Webb, if he had been on the floor, instead of in the Chair, would have voted in the negative, and so would Dr. Withrow, who went away before the proceedings were over; so that the minority really consisted of eighteen.

twelve or thirteen ministers and five or six laymen who constituted the minority, in view of the responsibility they were taking, would have asked for a vote by yeas and nays, but they seem not to have done so. After this action the Council accepted the order of exercises for the public services which had been prepared and printed by the Committee of Arrangements, except that the Rev. Dr. Merriman took the place of Dr. Webb, who had been expected to offer the prayer of installation, but now declined; and the Rev. Dr. McKenzie took the place of Dr. Duryea, who was to have given the right hand of fellowship, but, owing to the length of the session, was obliged to leave to keep another engagement.

The Committee had invited a few guests to meet the Council and pastor-elect at a collation to take place punctually at half-past five o'clock. Among those thus invited were the ministers of the neighboring churches,—the First, Second, First Baptist, Trinity, Arlington Street, and Emmanuel,—one of the secretaries of the American Board of Missions, the senior editor of the *Congregationalist* and a representative of the *Christian Union*. After waiting for more than an hour, and it being still uncertain how long the Council would continue to deliberate, the Committee took its guests, who represented four different denominations, to the church dining room, where many kind words of welcome to the pastor-elect, and of congratulation to the Committee and the Church were spoken.

An hour later the Council adjourned and partook of the collation prepared for it, and soon after the public

services of installation commenced in the meeting-house, where a large congregation had been for some time assembled. The choir sang the anthem, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord,"—Isaiah xl. 3–8, and a prayer of invocation was offered by the Rev. Dr. Blagden. Psalms lxxxvii and cxxii were read responsively by the Rev. Wm. Burnet Wright and the congregation, and Mr. Wright read a selection from the Holy Scriptures. The choir and congregation joined in singing an original hymn, written for the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Tarbox, "O God, unto thee would we gratefully raise," to the tune "Portuguese Hymn," after which a sermon was preached by the Rev. Professor Tucker, from 2 Cor. iv. 13: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written [Psalms cxvi. 10], I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." The prayer of installation was then offered by the Rev. Dr. Merriman, followed by the singing of the hymn, "I love thy kingdom, Lord," to the tune "Boylston." The Rev. Professor Barbour gave the charge to the pastor, the Rev. Dr. McKenzie, the right hand of fellowship, and the Rev. Dr. Herrick, the charge to the people. The choir and congregation sang an original hymn, written by a member of the Church, "In the long line of cherished names," to the tune "Missionary Chant," and at a late hour in the evening the deeply interesting and impressive services were brought to a close with the benediction pronounced by the newly installed pastor.

Mr. Gordon preached to his people for the first time, on the following Sunday, April 6th, in the morning,

from the text 1 Cor. ii. 5: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," and in the afternoon, from Psalms xci. 4: "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

"Down through the ages, Thou hast proved
Thine Israel's Guide, Protector, Friend,
Each covenant blessed — each foe removed;
So love and guard us to the end!

"To God the Father, with the Son,
And Holy Ghost be praises given;
'Mid toils below, and victories won,
By all on earth and all in heaven."

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